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Ms. Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

EX Parte No. 705

Dear Ms. Brown:

I am writing to urge the Surface Transportation Board to make a finding that there is a profound lack of rail-to-rail competition in the national rail system. The STB should change its policies to enable increased rail-to-rail competition.

Currently, anti-competitive practices within the railroad industry have driven costs up on my monthly electric bill. That's not right and the STB can help fix it. The real problem for me is that as a taxpayer I already contribute to the railroad thru subsidies that they receive from the government. But instead of understanding that the money they receive comes from me, they are taking advantage of the fact that they have little competition and therefore are gouging everyone on their rates. What they charge for the transport of coal directly effects my electric bill.

Rural-based business and agriculture rely on affordable electricity. Increased rail competition will help maintain affordable electric rates in rural America and will improve economic opportunities for rural communities like mine.

Increased rail competition will also increase the revenues of American agriculture by improving the ability of producers and manufacturers to ship their products affordably, thus improving exports, creating jobs and improving the standard of living in rural communities.

The Surface Transportation Board has an opportunity to make a positive difference and help improve our economy. The comments that the STB has received include numerous examples of the lack of adequate competition in the railroad industry. I hope the STB will find that there is inadequate competition in the railroad industry and will then revise their policies to enhance rail-to-rail competition in order to help preserve affordable electricity and good jobs throughout America.

Thank you,
Norma Butler
Custer PPD

Norma Butler
PO Box 194, 904 Court Street
Thedford, NE 69166

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